#208
Proposed Resolution

Submitted by: SEIU Healthcare IL/IN/MO/KS

Hospital Workers Fight for 15

Healthcare workers save lives, protect against the spread of disease and infection, and provide care to patients their families.

The healthcare industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in the United States. Even with focus shifted toward primary and preventative care, hospitals remain central to the healthcare delivery system and are an economic backbone of communities across the country.

As the industry grows, hospitals are becoming more corporatized and many are run with an emphasis on the "bottom-line"-- resulting in stagnant wages for hospital workers, inadequate staffing and other cost-saving measures that harm workers and patients.

While hospital management focuses on profits, hospital workers earn far below the annual living wage for a family of two. Many hospitals benefit from a double subsidy-- paying substandard wages to workers who must rely on antipoverty programs such as Medicaid or SNAP, while simultaneously taking advantage of nonprofit status or corporate tax breaks to enrich their executives while failing to contribute their fair share in taxes that fund these antipoverty programs in our states and communities.

Wealth and poverty are key social determinants of health. People who live in poverty disproportionately suffer from chronic conditions and have poorer health outcomes and lower life-expectancies. Women and people of color are overrepresented in low-wage jobs— particularly in the "caring" professions such as nursing— and are therefore more likely to be affected by health disparities. When a hospital pays its workers substandard wages, it belies its mission to improve health and instead contributes to worsening the health of its employees and their families.

Increasing the minimum wage to $15 per hour improves working and living conditions for low-wage workers and their families, spurs consumer spending and grows our economy.

Competitive wages for technical workers, nurses, and other healthcare professionals are needed to strengthen and stabilize the healthcare workforce.

Therefore, be it resolved that SEIU members and locals will campaign for a $15 wage floor for all hospital workers and 15% raises for healthcare workers, publicly and during collective bargaining.

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